CRITTER ISLAND

Screenplay
by

Yolanda Buggs

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FADE IN:

EXT. HARLEM RETIREMENT HOME - AFTERNOON

Red brick high rise building. Outdated in its design.

A Dominos pizza delivery truck SCREECHES from the lot.

MARIO (O.S.)
Only thirty seconds left. Faster, Twinkles! Faster!

VICKI (O.S.)
Pick up the pace, Jaws!

INT. HARLEM RETIREMENT HOME - KITCHEN - STOVE TOP - AFTERNOON

On a clock above the stove, the second hand ticks past six.

A large DOMINOS PIZZA sits on the stove's eye.

Sausages are flying out from the two steam holes in back.

Below, catching and stacking each sausage, is an adolescent gang of Oriental Cockroaches, also known as WATER BUGS. The kids each have brown wings that are slightly shorter than their dark reddish bodies.

The leader of their gang is MARIO JACKSON, 10, self proclaimed King of the Water Bugs. His cute dimples accent his round face and stubby antennas.

Mario sports a cool red, white, and black bandanna with a matching backpack.

MARIO
Faster, man!

Sausages fly out the left steam hole faster.

MARIO (CONT'D)
That's it, baby! Work it!

Sausages zip down a line of determined water bugs.

MARIO (CONT'D)
We got 'em! We got 'em!

Across from Mario and his gang are their rivals, the BROWN-BANDED Cockroach species also known as the Brown Bandits. This adolescent gang has a distinct cross banding around their yellowish-brown bodies.

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The Brown Bandits sausages are flying out from the right steam hole. Their gang leader is VICKI, 10, a cute, girl roach with way too much attitude. She has big, hazel brown eyes and long, curly lashes. Her antenna sprouts are just starting to take shape. Vicki instructs her gang's operation.

MARIO (CONT'D)
(turns to Vicki, smiles)
We win, I get a kiss. Okay, girl?

Mario puckers and blows kisses at her.

VICKI
It'll be a good day in fumigation hell before those crusty peckers of yours touch these soft, luscious lips of perfection.

Mario smiles and turns to his gang confidently.

MARIO
She wants me.

VICKI
I'd rather take my chances trying to out run the bug man than kiss you, Mario Jackson!

A few bugs snicker.

VICKI (CONT'D)
No, I take that back.

MARIO
(to his gang)
Told you. She's diggin' me.

VICKI
I'd rather date the bug man than have those hard, scratchy lips touch me.

More laughs.

VICKI (CONT'D)
I would even rather pucker up with the nozzle of a bug spray can than--

MARIO
We get the point, girl!

Mario turns, eyes the second hand as it hits twelve and...

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MARIO (CONT'D)
Time!

A thin, sweaty face covered in pizza sauce pokes out of the left steam hole. This is TWINKLES, 9, Mario's best friend.

Two more sausages shoot from the right steam hole.

MARIO (CONT'D)
I said time!

JAWS, 8, pops his chunky head out, munching on a sausage.

JAWS
Say it louder next time.

TWINKLES
Try listening next time.

JAWS
Ah, you water bugs make me sick.

TWINKLES
Wanna say that to my face, fat boy?

Jaws worms his bloated body out of the small steam hole at the same time Twinkles slinks his unusually skinny body out.

MARIO
Last two don't count.

VICKI
Oh stop your whining, Mario. So the last two don't count.

TWINKLES
And don't forget the three sausage penalty for going past the time.

MARIO
That's right... a three sausage penalty.

JAWS
Who cares.

VICKI
Yeah. Bet we still win.

JAWS
Cause brown-bandits run thangs around this camp!

All the brown-bandits agree.

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MARIO
Not as long as we water bugs are scurrying the joint!

All the water bugs agree.

MARIO (CONT'D)
Cheaters.

VICKI
Losers.

Vicki squints at Mario. He narrows his eyes back at her.

MARIO
Rumble. Winner claims the kitchen as their turf. Your call.
(extends a hand)
Deal?

VICKI
(shakes his hand)
Deal.

Mario purposely squeezes her hand too hard.

VICKI (CONT'D)
Ouch!

He laughs as Vicki shoves him in the chest.

MARIO
You push just like a girl.

A KITCHEN LIGHT POPS ON

FOOT STEPS are heard entering.

Young roaches, at least twenty or so, scatter like buckshots. Bugs scurry into the cracks while some cower between napkin sheets. Twinkles ducks behind a roll of paper towels.

TWINKLES
(whispers)
Psst, Mario. What'cha doing?

He's cramming sausages in his backpack when...

A HAND OPENS THE PIZZA BOX

The lid falls back.

Mario looks up, fearful, sees darkness falling down on him.

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SEE CHARACTERS BELOW

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MARIO (1 0)

Adventurous, rule breaking,
highly competitive, quick thinking,
street-wise, dimple packing water bug
that never runs from a challenge.
His popularity and daredevil tendencies
solidify his spot as leader of his
Water Bug cockroach clan.

VICKI (1 0)

Cute, sassy, stubborn,
outspoken, book smart
leader of her Brown-bandit cockroach clan.
She personally looks for ways to humiliate
her rivals, Mario and his friends, at every turn.

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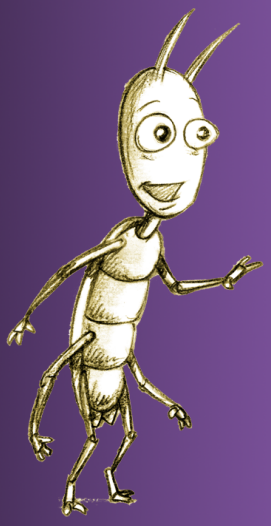
TWINKLES (9)

Mario's orphaned, loyal, sensitive best friend and his opposite. He is an unusually skinny water bug who walks on his toes. He is respected in their group as the cautious, levelheaded, dependable voice of reason.



JAWS (8)

He is Vicki's spoiled, sly, chubby, little brother who constantly pesters his rivals, the water bugs. As a member of the Brown-bandit cockroach clan, he looks for ways to diminish Mario's popularity.

BLINKY (13)

Hypersensitive , fugitive lab mouse
He's unkempt and small in stature,
obviously the runt of the litter.
Blinky has a nervous
twitch and a lazy
right eye and ear.

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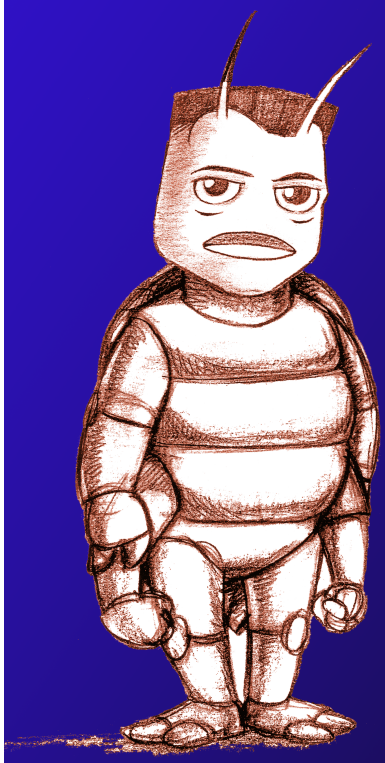

ED (35)

Mario's protective, devoted father
who has a family first attitude.
Ed is the proud president of his community's
Neighborhood Watch Association.
He's a fair, but stern leader who believes
bugs should always follow the rules.

CARRIE (35)

Mario's nurturing, overprotective mother.
Carrie is an expert in reverse psychology
and knows how to keep Mario's antics
in check despite the fact she's about to
give birth any day now.

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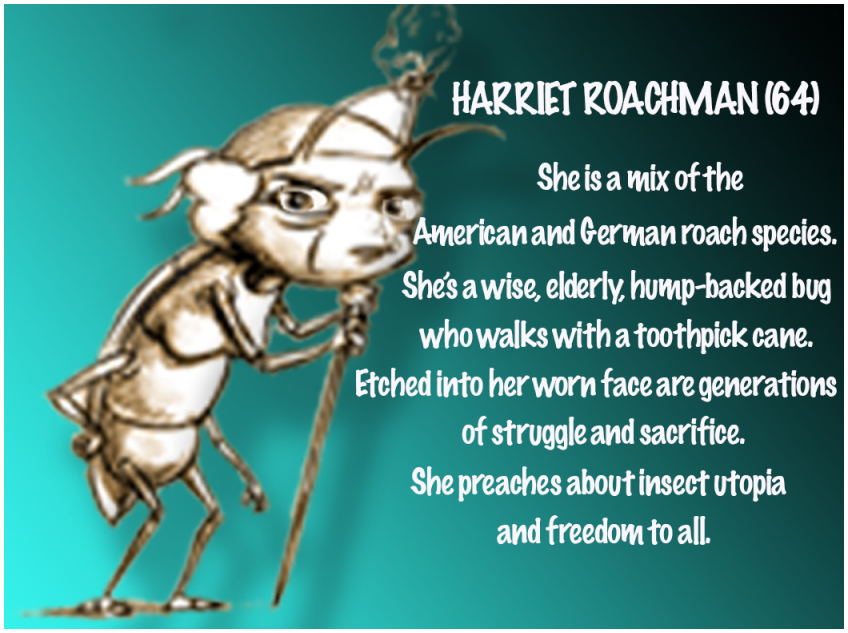
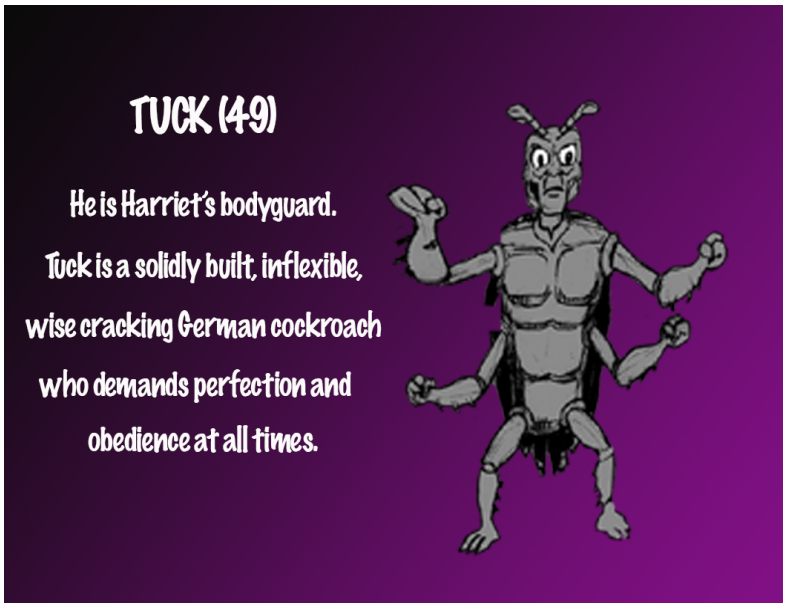

HARRIET ROACHMAN (64)
She is a mix of the
American and German roach species.
She's a wise, elderly, hump-backed bug
who walks with a toothpick cane.
Etched into her worn face are generations
of struggle and sacrifice.
She preaches about insect utopia
and freedom to all.


TUCK (49)
He is Harriet's bodyguard.
Tuck is a solidly built, inflexible,
wise cracking German cockroach
who demands perfection and
obedience at all times.

OLD TIMER (72)
He is a skilled martial artist from Africa.
He's a gentle spirited, vegetarian
Praying Mantis who loves telling
bug-time stories to the kids.
He's a respected and wise
community elder.

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